

Sleeping Coconuts Cluster Projects

Grades K-1



Description:

A story, an indoor relay race for pre-readers and new readers to demonstrate the benefits of doing Bible translation in cluster projects, and an optional coloring page

Aims:

- Children will learn how God used a huge tragedy to change the way Bible translation teams worked in Papua New Guinea.
- Children will learn the advantage of teamwork in Bible translation cluster projects.
- Children can review the lesson through a coloring page option.

Audience:

Grades K-1

Minimum Time Requirements:

12-20 minutes

Scripture:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Materials:

- Chalk board, white board, or poster board to write on and appropriate writing implements
- Optional: globe or world map
- Copies of the booklets found on pages 8-29
- One pencil for each student
- Bible marked at Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
- An eleven-foot long piece of soft rope or heavy string
- Two baskets that are large enough to hold eleven folded sheets of paper
- A copy of the photo from page 30
- Optional: copies of the coloring picture from page 31 with crayons or only brown and green crayons

If you have any questions or problems related to this lesson, please contact Wycliffe's Children's Communications team at kids@wycliffe.org.

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More curricula to engage children in Bible translation are available at www.wycliffe.org/kids.

Pre-class Preparation:

- Prepare a chalk board, white board, or poster board with two columns. At the top of one column draw a single stick figure, and write the word “alone.” At the top of the other column draw several stick figures, and write the words “in a group.”
- Make copies of the one-page “booklets” from pages 8–29. Print them front and back (duplex). You may want to trim off the footer area before folding them all in half. You need two complete sets of booklets for each language—22 booklets in total. (If this is too much printing, you may print two complete sets of only a few of the languages, which will shorten the tracing time activity.)
- Provide one pencil for each child. The “alone” table needs only one pencil. The “together” table needs one pencil for every child in that group (half of the class.)
- Place booklets on the tables—one of each language on each table. If you have more than twenty-two students in a group, you may need two copies of some languages on both tables.
- Place a basket on each table where children can place completed booklets.
- Prepare a large copy of the photo on page 30.
- Optional: Decide if you want to include the Sleeping Coconuts coloring page on page 31. If you do, make a copy for each child and provide crayons or only brown and green crayons.

Class Time:

Display the two-column chart, and say,

We want to fill in both sides of this chart, but first let’s just think about the kinds of things we do best all by ourselves.

If children have a hard time getting started, you might provide a few suggestions like,

Eat an ice cream cone, get dressed, wash your hands, drink a glass of milk, ride a tricycle or bicycle, draw a picture, slip on your shoes.

After you have several items listed in the “alone” column, begin filling the “together on a team” column. Say,

Now it’s time to make a list of what we do best working on a team with other people. Tell me what to write down in this column.

Materials:

- Two-column chart with a single stick figure and the word “alone” at the top of one column and several stick figures and the words “together on a team” at the top of the other column on a chalk board, white board, or poster board with appropriate writing implements

If children have a hard time getting started, you might provide a few suggestions like,

Play a game like Candy Land®, go to a movie, eat a whole watermelon (or a whole pizza), play tag, march in a parade, celebrate Christmas (or Thanksgiving).

When the children seem to have the idea that some activities work better when you're alone and some when you're working together on a team, ask,

Which way do you think would be a better way for translating the Bible into a different language: working alone, or working together on a team? (Translating means to write the Bible in another language.)

After some comments, say,

That's kind of a trick question because some translators work alone with a little bit of help from others. Other translators work together in teams. The Arop translation project in Papua New Guinea started as one man working alone with a little bit of help. Listen to this story to hear how that changed.

Optional: Point out Papua New Guinea on a globe or world map.

Read the following story.

Sleeping Coconuts*

What in the world are Sleeping coconuts? Many people in Papua New Guinea (PNG) speak the Tok Pisin language. In Tok Pisin they say that anything lying down is "sleeping." Coconut trees normally stand straight and tall. They don't "sleep." Let's start at the beginning and find out what made some coconut trees in PNG look like they were sleeping.

John and Bonnie Nystrom went to school when they were a young couple. They knew that people around the world speak many different languages. John and Bonnie wanted to write the Bible in other people's languages. In other words, they wanted to do Bible translation. They finished school. Then they packed or sold their possessions. God told some people to pray for the Nystroms and others to donate money to help them do their job. This is called a partner team. John and Bonnie looked forward to life in Papua New Guinea. Right after arriving in PNG, they went to another school. It helped them learn to live in a very different country like PNG. They decided to live and work in the village of Arop. First they started learning the Arop language and culture.

Materials:

*Adapted from a book of the same name by John and Bonnie Nystrom, published by Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc., 2012, available at www.sleepingcoconuts.com or <https://shop.wycliffe.org/>.

The village of Arop sat on a narrow sand spit (strip of beach). It was between a sea and a lagoon (salt water lake). That little spit measured only 100 yards wide. That's about the length of a football field. It was 3 miles long so the shape was sort of like your finger—long and thin. The Nystrom's didn't think big storms like typhoons or hurricanes would hurt Arop. They felt safe there.

For ten years John Nystrom worked with some Arop speakers. They started translating God's Word into the Arop language. Then disaster struck! Three huge waves, called tsunamis, hit the sand spit. Canoes and people tumbled into the lagoon. Buildings—like the Nystrom's house—crumpled and washed into the lagoon as well. The waves broke and uprooted coconut palms. The people said that the trees were "sleeping." One out of every three Arop moms, dads, and children died that day.

At first this tsunami seemed like a huge roadblock that might stop the Bible translation work. Could God bring good out of something so horrible?

Yes, God had a plan! He turned this tragedy into a chance to make good changes. The Arop people couldn't rebuild on the same sand spit. It had gotten even smaller. So, they decided to move closer to other language groups that also needed God's Word. John began to wonder if he could work with more than one language group here. He could, and he did! God put all the pieces together. Now John helps Bible translation teams from 11 different languages translate the Bible into their own languages! They call this a language cluster translation project—or "cluster project" for short.

The 11 teams called themselves the Aitape West Translation Project.* By June 2011 several teams had published the book of Luke. They felt so happy. They made copies for people to read. It had taken many years of hard work to reach this point. So the translation teams took the entire month to celebrate.

Show children the photo from page 30. Then continue by saying,

Today if you were to visit that narrow spit of sand where Arop village once stood, you would see that many of the coconut trees now bend upwards. The trees were left leaning over after the tsunami. People called these trees "sleeping coconuts." But over time their trunks began to grow toward the sky once again—just as God designed



*The Aitape West Translation Project includes 11 languages from three language family clusters. You can find out more about this translation project at www.thenystroms.org/awtp

Materials:

- Photo from page 30
- Copies of the booklets found on pages 8–29
- One pencil for each student
- Two baskets that are large enough to hold 11 folded sheets of paper

**For other information and pictures related to this story click on "Media" at www.sleepingcoconuts.com

them to do. They stand bent but beautiful. They give fruit, too. They are like a sign saying that God can change (or transform) a very sad time into something amazing—even something that brings Him glory.**

Answer questions and allow comments related to the story.

Optional: Let the children find the sleeping coconut in the coloring picture from page 31, and color it according to the directions.

Then introduce the simulation activity by saying,

Now we're going to pretend to translate the New Testament into the 11 Aitape West Cluster Project languages.

Hold up one of the booklets. Explain,

Each of you will trace the words, "God is love" in one of these booklets. Let's pretend that the booklets are New Testaments and that we are writing in 11 different languages from the Aitape West Cluster Project.

I will divide you into two groups to show two different ways that translators can work on Bible translations.

Seat the children in two equal, but separate, groups.

Select one group. Arrange them in a single file line, one child behind the other. Demonstrate each step as you explain,

Each of you in this group will pretend to translate *alone*. (*Point to the single stick figure on your chart.*) You will line up. When I say, "Go," the first person in line will walk quickly to the table. (*Indicate which table.*) When he/she gets there, he/she will pick up a pencil and a booklet. He/she will open the booklet and trace over the words, "God is love," inside. After he/she traces the words, they will put that booklet in the basket. Then they will leave the pencil on the table and walk quickly back to their team. They will go to the back of the line and sit down. As soon as one person sits down, the next person in line will go and do the same thing. Keep doing this until all 11 books are in the basket.

Answer any questions the first group may have. Then arrange the second group in a line, side-by-side. Have them sit down. Place the rope in front of them, and demonstrate each step as you explain.

In this group you will pretend to translate as a *team* working together. (*Point to the stick figure group on your chart.*) When I say, "Go," pick up the part of the rope that is right in front of you. As soon as everybody on your team is holding onto the rope, begin walking quickly together to this table. (*Indicate which table.*) Be careful not to push or trip each other! That will make your translation take longer. When you get to the table,

Materials:

- Optional: enough copies of the coloring picture from page 31 and brown and green crayons for all.
- One of the "booklets" as an example
- An 11-foot long piece of soft rope or heavy string

each of you should take a booklet and a pencil. Open your booklet and trace the words, "God is love." After you finish, put your booklet in the basket. After everyone on your team finishes, you will all pick up the rope again and walk together back to where you started. Then you'll sit down.*

Answer any questions that come up, and then ask,

Let's think for a minute about how these two groups will work. Which one do you think will finish first—the group where each translator works alone (*point to the single stick figure in the chart*), or the group that works as a team? (*Point to the stick figure group on your chart.*)

Allow the students to respond. Then ask the students to stand up in their appropriate lines. When everyone is ready, say,

Go!

You may need to help the team with the rope to get started.

Monitor progress, and help the children follow directions as needed.

When both teams have finished, discuss what happened by asking questions something like,

- Which group finished first? (*Point to the two categories on the chart.*)
- Why do you think they finished before the other team?
- Was it better to work alone or in a group?

Continue,

John Nystrom discovered that teamwork made Bible translation go more quickly for the 11 groups in the languages of the Aitape West Cluster. Of course, with more people working together, problems came up. Sometimes team members got confused. Some didn't understand each other. Some could not go as fast as others. The team members had to learn to trust each other and work together. Everyone on the team learned how to say what they thought without fear. Over time they understood that talking about problems often helped them to write things so people could understand better in all 11 languages.

John is not their leader now, but helps them with problems. His goal is no longer to finish one New Testament himself. Now his goal is to help all of the Aitape West translators make their Bible translations better. With that new goal in mind, he teaches them how to use new computer programs. Sometimes he uses the Internet to help them from far away. He says that at first it felt like they were moving backward rather than forward. But in 2011 when they celebrated the arrival of the book of Luke in 8 languages, they all knew that it was worth the struggles they had gone through.

* Note: You may want to ask another adult to help you make sure one team follows the directions while you help the other team.

Closing and prayer:

Open your Bible, and continue by saying,

God's Word also has some advice about teamwork. Listen to what Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 has to say about this.

After reading the verses, allow a time for comments. Then invite the children to pray for the Aitape West Cluster Translation Project based on what these Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 verses say.

Materials:

- Bible marked at Ecclesiastes 4:9–10



Bauni Barupu New Testament

God is love.

Bauni Pou New Testament



God is love.



Bauni New Testament



God is love.



Unit New Testament



God is love.



Goiniri New Testament



God is love.



Romei-Barrera New Testament

God is love.

Wolwale New Testament

God is love.

Serra

New Testament

God is love.

Sissano New Testament

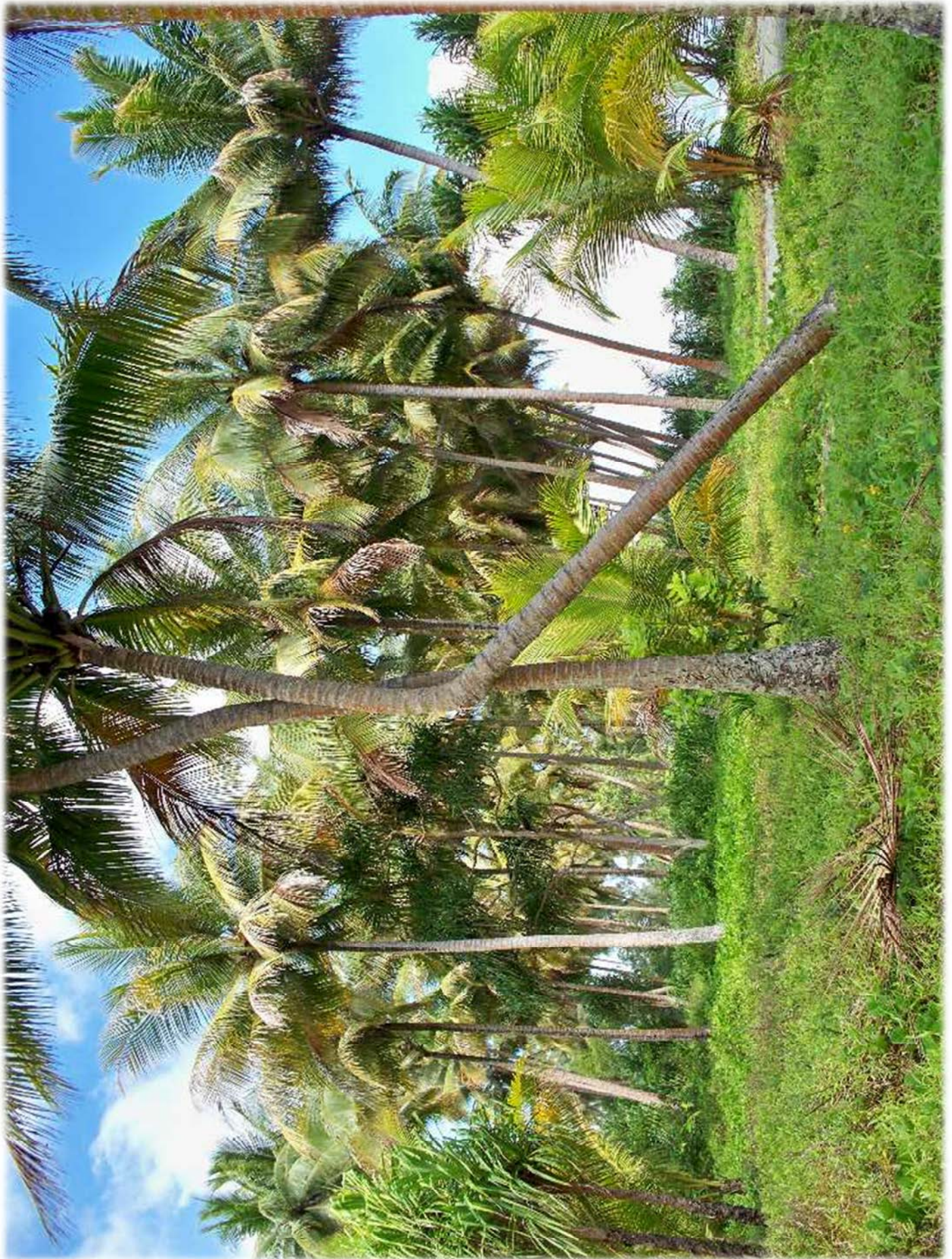
God is love.

Malol New Testament

God is love.

Arop New Testament

God is love.





Find the "sleeping coconut." Color the trunk brown or tan. Color the leaves green.

